



INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES

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PURPOSE

- ◆ Distinguish yourself from other candidates
- ◆ Communicate 'evidence' of your ability to do the job
- ◆ 'Strategically' highlight experiences, skills, knowledge related to the job

PRE-INTERVIEW RESEARCH:

The Job - What skills, tasks, and workstyle are part of the job?

Resources:

- Job descriptions found in publications in Career Services
- Descriptions found on professional association websites
- Talk to current staff or alumni, including Dartmouth Career Network

The Employer - What are its products & services? What is the organization's culture?

What distinguishes the organization from its competitors?

How has the organization performed in the last year?

Resources:

- Go to Career Services website at 'Conducting Employer Research'
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~csrc/students/research.html>
- Talk to current staff or alumni, including Dartmouth Career Network

The Industry - What are the recent developments/trends in the industry?

How will they affect the work performed by the employer/job?

Resources:

- Read trade publications related to the industry
The Library subscribes to several - eg. Advertising Age)
- Read the daily national newspaper or industry-specific newspaper
- Read news updates on professional associations' websites

The Applicant - What are your most relevant skills, experiences, knowledge, related to the job?

(You !) How will you describe these so that they are well understood?

Procedures:

- 'Match' all the skills, etc. needed to perform the job to all experiences you've had where you used those same qualities
- Go through your whole resume and identify key skills/topics used in each experience

Preparing for the Interview



SCHEDULING: When possible, select a time of day when you are mentally at your ‘best’

APPEARANCE: Dress to project a ‘professional’ image.

Select clothing that is consistent for that occupation - Career Advisors and alumni can advise.
When in doubt, assume a higher standard ! Err on the conservative.

Women

Suit (best option) - typically dark, pants OK
Blouse - white or soft colors; not low-cut
Stockings - Neutral, tan or dark
Short to medium heels or flats
Light perfume, if any
Hair under control - can be tied back
Deodorant
Handbag - small size, but not necessary
Fresh breath - no smoking prior/no gum

Men

Well-fitted Suit - grey, navy, black
Shirt - white button down or classic collar
Over the calf socks
Polished shoes
Moderate to conservative tie
Fresh shave, no fragrance aftershave
Neat, recently cut hair
Deodorant
Fresh breath - no smoking prior/no gum

Great Website:

Dress to Achieve <http://www.symsdress.com/>

Avoid: Low cut tops, facial piercings/excess earrings, bold colors, short short skirts, wrinkled clothing (anything that distracts focus from your candidacy)

Avoid: Spending too much on your main outfit - In addition to checking with local retailers, consider borrowing from a friend, or buying from stores that sell ‘gently-worn’ clothes

DAY OF THE INTERVIEW:

Arrival - Arrive at least 15 minutes before the interview. Bring paper, pen, and calculator (if case interview)

Resumes - Review your experiences one last time; Bring extra copies with you

Handshake - Firm and brief; look the interviewer in the eye

Habits - Be aware they can be distracting - eg. Words such as “like”, “um”, playing with a pen; tapping your fingers....

Non-Verbal - Use your body language to show interest - (eg. smile, posture, eye contact)

Business Card - Request the interviewer’s card at the end of the interview

Next Step - At the end of the interview, ask about the next step in the process

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- Assess your performance - What could be improved?
- Send a ‘Thank You’ (typed) - Re-state your interest, emphasize relevant information you may not have mentioned and/or highlight your assessment of your candidacy.

Interview Types

OFF-THE-RESUME ♦ BEHAVIORAL



OFF-THE-RESUME

Method: Ask you to describe a random experience from your resume

Preparation: Thoroughly review each experience on your resume, identifying skills/topics related to the job

Strategy: ↳ Describe the experience, using Situation - Task - Action - Result star method.
↳ Be explicit, yet concise, so that the interviewer can envision you in this situation
↳ Emphasize the skills/topics that relate most to the job for which you are interviewing
↳ When finished, point out the relationship between that experience and the job

PRACTICE....PRACTICE....PRACTICE

BEHAVIORAL (Known as competency-based interviewing - most popular)

Method: Ask you to describe an experience where you used a particular skill (that the employer deems critical to perform the job)

The question may be quite open-ended, eg. "Tell me about a time when you faced adversity?"

Preparation: Thoroughly research the job and the type of work style needed to perform it - Identify 8-10 skills embedded in the job

Identify 1-2 examples of experiences that would 'showcase' your use of that skill

Strategy: ↳ Describe the experience, using Situation - Action - Result star method.
↳ Be explicit, yet concise, so that the interviewer can envision you in this situation
↳ Be careful to emphasize the skill being asked about (don't veer off in your description)
↳ When finished, point out the relationship between that experience and the job

PRACTICE....PRACTICE....PRACTICE

Some Behavioral Competencies:

Leadership - Vision, Strategic Planning, Establishing Goals & Objectives, Setting Policy, Crisis Management, Empowerment, Change Management, Cultivating Networks, Setting Agenda, Risk Assessment, Environmental Scanning, Values Building

Transition Ability - Managing Task Complexity, Stress & Pressure Tolerance, Ambiguity Tolerance, Managing Uncertainty, Willingness to Learn, Flexibility, Shifting Perspective

Management - Organization Design, Management Systems Design, Project/Task Force Management, Staffing, Mentoring, Priority Setting, Information Technology Integration, Planning & Organizing, Team Building, Administrating, Motivating and Delegating, Budgeting and Resource Allocation, Time Management, Committee Management, Attention to Detail & Followup

Interpersonal - Conflict Resolution, Consensus Building, Influence, Selling, Negotiating, Awareness/Sensitivity/Empathy, Communication, Listening, Feedback, Informing, Delegating

Cognitive - Information Evaluation & Synthesis, Innovation & Lateral Thinking, Creativity, Conceptualizing, Financial & Quantitative Analysis, Problem Identification & Analysis, Problem Solving, Decision Making

Motivation & Values - Accountability, Ethics/Integrity/Trust, Risk Taking, Competitiveness, Humor, Proactive & Opportunistic, Realism, Urgency, Confidence, Roll-Up-Sleeves Attitude, Energy Level.

Interview Styles

TRADITIONAL ♦ CASE



TRADITIONAL

Method: Ask you more ‘process’-oriented or descriptive questions. Many are to assess your motivation.

Preparation: Be ready to answer any question shown below

- Strategy:**
- When possible, include an example of an experience related to the question
 - Frame descriptions of experiences using the **S-T-A-R** Model
Situation-What was your purpose/problem? Task - What action needed to occur?
Action- What did you do? Result - What was the outcome?
 - Always relate your answer to the job to which you are interviewing !!
 - Don’t lose sight of the question you were asked

PRACTICE....PRACTICE....PRACTICE

Sample Traditional Questions

Tell me about yourself?	What are your short- and long-range goals?	Why do you want this job?
What is your favorite course? Why?	What are 2-3 of your greatest accomplishments?	Why should I hire you?
What are your strengths? Weaknesses?	What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?	Describe your ideal job.
What do you expect to be earning?	What did you choose this job? career?	What frustrates you the most?
What do you know about this company? Industry?	Are your grades representative of your ability?	Describe yourself.
How did you choose your major?	How would others describe you?	
How has college prepared you for a career?	In what kinds of environments are you most comfortable?	
What motivates you to put out the greatest effort?	What has been your greatest disappointment?	
How do you determine/evaluate success?	What are the most important rewards you expect in life?	
What do you think it takes to succeed in this job?	How can you make a contribution to this organization?	
Describe your ideal supervisor?	What was your most rewarding college experience?	
How did you choose Dartmouth College?	What are 2-3 things that are important to you in a job?	
What changes would you make in Dartmouth?	Describe how you work under pressure?	
What past jobs have you enjoyed most?	How do you keep up with current events in this profession?	
What type of work do you not like to do?	How did you decide to apply to us?	
What do you know about this organization?	What have you learned from your participation in campus activities?	
How have you shown initiative in the past?	What criteria do you use to evaluate an organization?	

CASE

Method: Ask you to problem solve a ‘case’ by talking out the essential elements/issues. Cases are designed to test your ability to work through a mathematical problem logically, to make reasonable and well-founded assumptions, and to perform basic calculations comfortably and accurately. Cases may include strategy issues - ex. how to increase sales; estimation - ex. how many cars were sold online; or a ‘brain teaser’

Preparation: Study ‘frameworks’ for solving cases - See ‘Other Resources’ in this handout
Bring a notepad & calculator to the interview

- Strategy:** Apply a logical, well-structured approach that enables you to reach a reasoned conclusion
- Understand the question & ask for clarification
 - Break the problem down into a logical structure - 1) provide a ‘roadmap’ of how you are going to approach the overall problem, before delving into the details of each issue; 2) prioritize the issues that you will discuss; 3) proceed in an organized manner
 - Request additional information - selectively - explain why you think it is relevant to the analysis
 - Check that you’re addressing the question - watch for interviewer cues - Think creatively
 - Conclude - summarize your thoughts concisely and develop a recommendation

PRACTICE....PRACTICE....PRACTICE

Illegal & Inappropriate Questions



Various federal, state, and local laws regulate the questions you can be asked as a job candidate. An employer's questions - whether on the job application, in the interview, or during the testing process - must be related to measuring your ability to do the job you are seeking. For the employer, the focus must be: "What do I need to know to decide whether this candidate can perform the functions of this job?"

If asked an illegal or inappropriate question..... *Let us know, if the employer is associated with Dartmouth

- You can answer the question - However, you are giving information that isn't related to the job and it could harm your chances of getting the job
- You can ask about the intent of the question - "Can you help me understand how this (topic) is related to the job?"
- You can examine the question for its intent, but respond with an answer as it might apply to the job - If asked, "Are you a U.S. citizen?", you could respond by saying "I am authorized to work in the U.S."

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Illegal Question</u>	<u>Legal Question</u>
National Origin/ Citizenship	Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you/your parents born? What is your "native tongue"?	Are you authorized to work in the U.S.? What language do you read/speak/write fluently? (This question is OK only if this ability is relevant to job)
Age	How old are you? When did you graduate? What is your birth date?	Are you over the age of 18?
Marital/Family Status	What's your marital status? With whom do you live? Do you plan to have a family? When?	Would you be willing to relocate? Would you be willing and able to travel as needed for the job? (OK if it is asked of all applicants). Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (OK if asked of all applicants)
Affiliations	What clubs or social organization do you belong to?	List any professional / trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform the job.
Personal	How tall are you? How much do you weigh? (Not acceptable unless essential for the safe performance of the job)	Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as part of the job?
Disabilities	Do you have any disabilities? Please complete the following medical history...Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list them and give dates of occurrence. What was the date of your last physical? How's your family health? Do you need an accommodation to perform the job? (Can <u>only</u> be asked after a job offer has been made)	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? (OK if the job has been described by the interviewer). Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions? As part of the hiring process, after a job offer has been made, you will be required to undergo a physical exam. (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on exam results)
Arrest	Have you ever been arrested?	Have you ever been convicted of ____? (The crime named should be reasonably related to the performance of the job)
Military	If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?	In what branch of the Armed Forces did You serve? What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

*Adapted from NACE's JobWeb by Rochelle Kaplan

Other Resources In Career Services



GENERAL:

Get Hired! Winning Strategies to Ace the Interview by Paul C. Green
Resumes & Interviews - Job Web http://www.jobweb.com/resumes_interviews.aspx?id=896

EDUCATION:

'Education General Information' green binder in Career Services - Section on interview questions

CASE INTERVIEWING:

Book Resources:

Case in Point by Marc Cosentino
Ace Your Case By Wet Feet Press
Insider's Guide to Management Consulting
Tuck Consulting Club (more advanced)
The Harvard Guide to Consulting

Case Presentations:

(<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~csrc/students/handouts.html>)
Accenture
Bain
Parthenon
Boston Consulting Group (BCG)
Investor Group Services (IGS)

TUCK LIAISON PROGRAM:

1. Mock Case Interview program in Fall
2. Tuck Liaison Binder (in Career Services) - Resumes of Tuck students willing to discuss employers, industries, and possibly arrange individual mock interview

Ways to Practice Interviewing

With a Friend &
in your interview outfit

Use 'Flash Cards' & talk out loud

With someone in that career

Videotape yourself
in interview outfit

~ How to Blow the Interview ~

Lack of knowledge of the job, employer, industry
Fail to relate relevant experience to the job
Poor or inappropriate personal appearance
Distracting behavior or appearance
Describe experiences negatively
Fail to express yourself clearly
Demonstrate lack of purpose
Be discourteous or cynical
Ask no questions
No eye contact
Don't listen

Recruiters & Tuck Interviewers' Feedback:

"Must know more about position, show more interest"
"Seemed unprepared to talk about her own experiences"
"Take interviews seriously"
"Needs to focus on developing a 'story' that matches her background to the job. Sell your resume & skills!"
"Get more case practice"
"Research the company you are interviewing with; be knowledgeable so you can ask thoughtful questions"
"Did not answer the questions with specific examples"
"Need to strengthen explanations of work experiences"